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Biden Shuts Down Wilmington Drug Haven

Wilmington, DE – Attorney General Beau Biden announced today that for the first time in the City of Wilmington, a property has been shut down under Delaware's Nuisance Abatement Act. At a hearing today in Superior Court a residential property at 1014 Rodman Road in Wilmington's Canby Park neighborhood was declared the site of drug and vice crime and was ordered shuttered immediately by court order. In addition, the property's owner, William Murphy, is required to vacate the premises.

"Today we took action to make Wilmington safer," said Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III. "We're pleased that the Judge imposed the remedy we sought which will result in shutting the property down and requiring the owner to vacate the premises. The Delaware Department of Justice will continue to work to improve the quality of life by shutting down nuisance properties like the one we closed down today."

The Department of Justice alleges that the property, located adjacent to the Joseph H. Douglass School, has been the sight of constant drug traffic, prostitution activity, and that weapons have often been found on the premises. At one point, neighborhood residents were forced to evacuate after a live grenade was discovered in the row house. Following today's Superior Court proceeding, Judge Peggy Ableman agreed with the Department of Justice that the property presented an immediate threat to the public health, safety and welfare and ordered that it be shut down until a permanent hearing is held.

In August, 2007 Attorney General Biden launched a statewide effort to combat crime in Delaware under the state's newly enhanced Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act. Under the Nuisance Abatement Act, enforcement actions can take a variety of forms, including closure of a property. Today's ruling marks the third time that the Department of Justice has secured the closure of a property by court order using the Nuisance Abatement Act.

The Delaware Department of Justice identifies nuisance properties up and down Delaware through its own investigations and cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic associations, and neighborhood residents. Since August, 2007, the Department has issued more than 30 written notices to property owners in all three counties. These notices state that a nuisance exists on the property and give owners the choice of voluntarily cooperating to clean up the illegal activity, or defending themselves in court and being forced to clean up the crime by court order.

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